

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer program product tangibly embodied in a machine readable-storage device ~~an information carrier~~, the computer program product including instructions that, when executed, prioritize associations of products and business entities in a data collection, the computer program product configured to:

receive information associating a particular product from a group of associated particular products identified in the data collection with a particular business entity identified in the data collection, wherein:

the particular business entity is associated in the data collection with multiple data entries that each identify one or more product associations between one or more particular products from the group of associated particular products and ~~[[with]]~~ the particular business entity, and

each of the multiple data entries has a priority indication associated therewith; and storing an indication of the received information associating the particular product in one or more of the multiple data entries in the data collection for use in:

determining, in response to a received request, which of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity and identifying one or more product associations between the one or more particular products from the group of associated particular products and the particular business entity includes a higher priority indication, and

using a data entry of the multiple data entries that includes the higher priority indication to determine whether a product from a group of associated particular products identified in the data collection is associated with the particular business entity.

2. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 1 further configured to receive multiple priority indications wherein:

each of the multiple priority indications is associable with a data entry of the multiple data entries, and

the multiple priority indications are received before the information associating the particular product from a group of associated particular products identified in the data collection with the particular business entity identified in the data collection is received.

3. (Original) The computer program product of claim 1 wherein:
products identified in the data collection are associated with one of multiple product categories, and

at least one of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity identify at least one of the product associations based on an association of a product identified in the data collection with one of the multiple product categories.

4. (Original) The computer program product of claim 1 wherein:
business entities identified in the data collection are associated with one of multiple business entity categories, and

at least one of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity identify the particular business entity based on an association of the particular business entity identified in the data collection with one of the multiple product categories.

5. (Original) The computer program product of claim 1 wherein:
business entities identified in the data collection are organized into a business entity hierarchy, and

at least one of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity identify the particular business entity based on an association of the particular business entity with another business entity in the business entity hierarchy.

6. (Original) The computer program product of claim 1 wherein:
products identified in the data collection are organized into a product hierarchy, and
at least one of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity identify at least one of the product associations based on an association of the product with another product in the product hierarchy.

7. (Original) The computer program product of claim 1 wherein:
the information received includes a validity period,
at least one of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity is stored in the data collection and the at least one of the multiple data entries includes the validity period for use in determining which of the multiple data entries includes the higher priority indication and using the data entry of the multiple data entries that includes the higher priority indication and the validity period.

8. (Original) The computer program product of claim 1 wherein at least one of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity indicates that the particular business entity is permitted to sell a product identified by the one or more product associations.

9. (Original) The computer program product of claim 1 wherein at least one of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity indicates that the particular business entity is not permitted to sell a product identified by the one or more product associations.

10. (Original) The computer program product of claim 1 wherein at least one of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity indicates that the particular business entity is permitted to purchase a product identified by the one or more product associations.

11. (Original) The computer program product of claim 1 wherein at least one of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity indicates that the particular business entity is not permitted to purchase a product identified by the one or more product associations.

12. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for prioritizing associations of products and business entities in a data collection, the method comprising:
receiving information associating a particular product from a group of associated particular products identified in the data collection with a particular business entity identified in the data collection, wherein:

the particular business entity is associated in the data collection with multiple data entries that each identify one or more products associations between one or more particular products from the group of associated particular products and [[with]] the particular business entity and

each of the multiple data entries has a priority indication associated therewith; and
storing an indication of the received information associating the particular product in one or more of the multiple data entries in the data collection for use in:

determining, in response to a received request, which of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity and identifying one or more product associations between the one or more particular products from the group of associated particular products and the particular business entity includes a higher priority indication, and

using a data entry of the multiple data entries that includes the higher priority indication to determine whether a product from a group of associated particular products identified in the data collection is associated with the particular business entity.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12 further comprising receiving multiple priority indications wherein:

each of the multiple priority indications is associable with a data entry of the multiple data entries, and

the multiple priority indications are received before the information associating the particular product from a group of associated particular products identified in the data collection with the particular business entity identified in the data collection is received.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:

products identified in the data collection are associated with one of multiple product categories, and

at least one of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity identify at least one of the product associations based on an association of a product identified in the data collection with one of the multiple product categories.

15. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:

business entities identified in the data collection are associated with one of multiple business entity categories, and

at least one of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity identify the particular business entity based on an association of the particular business entity identified in the data collection with one of the multiple product categories.

16. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:

business entities identified in the data collection are organized into a business entity hierarchy, and

at least one of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity identify the particular business entity based on an association of the particular business entity with another business entity in the business entity hierarchy.

17. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:
products identified in the data collection are organized into a product hierarchy, and
at least one of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity identify at least one of the product associations based on an association of the product with another product in the product hierarchy.

18. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein:
the information received includes a validity period,
at least one of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity is stored in the data collection and the at least one of the multiple data entries includes the validity period for use in determining which of the multiple data entries includes the higher priority indication and using the data entry of the multiple data entries that includes the higher priority indication and the validity period.

19. (Currently Amended) A system for prioritizing associations of products and business entities in a data collection, the system comprising a processor connected to a storage device and one or more input/output devices, wherein the processor is configured to:
receive receiving information associating a particular product from a group of associated particular products identified in the data collection with a particular business entity identified in the data collection, wherein:
the particular business entity is associated in the data collection with multiple data entries that each identify one or more products associations between one or more

particular products from the group of associated particular products and [[with]] the particular business entity and

each of the multiple data entries has a priority indication associated therewith; and store an indication of the received information associating the particular product in one or more of the multiple data entries in the data collection for use in:

determining, in response to a received request, which of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity and identifying one or more product associations between the one or more particular products from the group of associated particular products and the particular business entity includes a higher priority indication, and

using a data entry of the multiple data entries that includes the higher priority indication to determine whether a product from a group of associated particular products identified in the data collection is associated with the particular business entity.

20. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 19 wherein the processor is further configured to receive multiple priority indications wherein:

each of the multiple priority indications is associable with a data entry of the multiple data entries, and

the multiple priority indications are received before the information associating the particular product from a group of associated particular products identified in the data collection with the particular business entity identified in the data collection is received.

21. (New) A computer program product tangibly embodied in a machine readable-storage device, the computer program product including instructions that, when executed, prioritize associations of products and business entities in a data collection, the computer program product configured to:

receive information associating a particular product within a hierarchy relating products identified in the data collection with a particular business entity within a hierarchy relating business entities identified in the data collection, wherein:

the particular business entity is associated in the data collection with multiple data entries that each identify one or more product associations between one or more particular products within the hierarchy relating products and the particular business entity within the hierarchy relating business entities,

at least one of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity identifies either one or both of:

the particular business entity based on an association of the particular business entity with another business entity in the hierarchy relating business entities, or

at least one of the product associations based on an association of the product with another product in the hierarchy relating products, and

each of the multiple data entries has a priority indication associated therewith; and storing an indication of the received information associating the particular product in one or more of the multiple data entries in the data collection for use in:

determining, in response to a received request, which of the multiple data entries associated with the particular business entity within the hierarchy relating business entities and identifying one or more product associations between the one or more particular products within the hierarchy relating products and the particular business entity within the hierarchy relating business entities includes a higher priority indication, and

using a data entry of the multiple data entries that includes the higher priority indication to determine whether a product within a hierarchy relating products identified in the data collection is associated with the particular business entity within a hierarchy relating business entities.